



UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY
REGION III
1650 Arch Street
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania 19103-2029

March 2, 2007

Robert A. Stovall, Acting District Ranger
USDA Forest Service
29 Forest Service Drive
Bradford, PA 16701

RE: Final Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) and Record of Decision for The West Branch of the Tionesta (Bradford Ranger District, Allegheny National Forest, Warren County, Pennsylvania) CEQ No. 20070024

Dear Mr. Stovall:

In accordance with the National Policy Act (NEPA) and Section 309 of the Clean Air Act, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has reviewed the Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) prepared by the US Department of Agriculture (USDA) Forest Service for the above referenced project. The EIS was prepared to meet the requirements of NEPA. Alternatives were developed, including the No Action alternative, to determine the best way to manage the multiple resources within the West Branch of the Tionesta. The issues analyzed included (1) the effects of road construction and vegetation management on Exceptional Value watersheds, unroaded areas and Wilderness trout streams, (2) management of the late successional landscape corridor, (3) level of timber harvest in Management Area 3.0 (age class distribution), (4) the effects of logging activities on dispersed recreation areas and the recreation corridor. A draft EIS was developed and circulated to the public and other agencies for comment.

The USDA Forest Service has chosen Alternative 4, modified to exclude 0.6 miles of new road construction and 25 acres of forest thinning within the Arnot Run Exceptional Value Watershed. Alternative 4 (modified) is the least environmentally damaging alternative that best achieves the forest plan goals, meets project specific needs and responds to the relevant issues raised by the public. EPA has no objections to this project.

EPA thanks you for the opportunity to comment on this EIS. Please contact Jamie Davis at (215) 814-5569 if you have any questions regarding our comments.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "William Arguto", is written over a horizontal line.

per William Arguto
NEPA Team Leader